

Act, Species, and Appearance

Peter Auriol on Intellectual Cognition and Consciousness

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The study of consciousness is without question one of the hottest topics in contemporary philosophy of mind, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience. Among other issues currently being debated are: whether consciousness even exists; if it does exist, then can we explain it or characterize it; and if we can do that, then can we explain or characterize the relation between consciousness, on one hand, and, for example, cognition or intentionality, on the other, and further can we say which of these is a more primitive feature of human mental life. All of this contemporary activity in the study of consciousness has been to some extent reflected in historical studies looking for how the notion of consciousness—if not the actual term “consciousness,” then at least the characteristics that today we tend to associate with that term—evolved in two and a half millennia of philosophical debate.¹ The present essay fits into that historical project. Here, in my attempt to find a historical figure who isolated something approaching what we denote by the word “consciousness,” I am going to focus on aspects of the theory of cognition elaborated in the late 1310s by the French Franciscan Peter Auriol (d. 1322). In order to see why Auriol might be of special interest in the search for a medieval description of consciousness, one need only consider the process that Auriol claims is involved in our coming to understand something or in having intellectual cognition of something. Auriol says that you begin with a mental representation, which has some kind of real existence in the soul of, say, a human being; you add this mental

An earlier version of this paper was read at a conference on Intentionality in Medieval Thought held at the University of Parma. I want to thank the conference organizer, Fabrizio Amerini, as well as the following conference participants for their comments and questions: Richard Cross, Bernd Goehring, Peter King, Gyula Klima, Calvin Normore, Claude Panaccio, and Martin Pickavé. In what follows, all references to the “Electronic Scriptum” are to electronic texts found at www.peterauriol.net; references like “X 725b” are to pages in the Rome 1596 printing of Auriol’s *Scriptum*. On the Rome 1605 edition of Auriol’s *II Sent.*, see note 38.

1. For a nice sketch of some of the issues involved in the historical study of consciousness, see especially the introduction to Sara Heinämaa, Vili Lähteenmäki, and Pauliina Remes, eds., *Consciousness: From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007).

representation to a cognitive power, in this case, an intellect; this intellect has an ability or characteristic that we would today call “consciousness” or “awareness,” but that Auriol calls the ability to be *appeared* to. As soon as you add the mental representation to the intellect, an intentional production is initiated, and what is produced is the concept, the word of the mind (*verbum mentis*), and this is the real world object of intellection put into intentional being; Auriol characterizes this intentional being as “in itself nothing” (*nihil in se*). This is not the end of the process, however, since for Auriol what is significant about understanding (or sensing, or cognizing in general) is that it involves something *appearing* to a conscious knower, and so the last and all important step on the way to intellectual cognition is the intentional object, the extramental object of cognition in intentional being, *appearing* to the intellect of the conceiver through the very same intellectual act through which the intentional object was formed in the first place. That is the big picture. In what follows, by examining in some detail the mechanics of intellectual cognition according to Peter Auriol, I want to show that as much as anyone in the medieval period, and more than most, Auriol recognized and brought into his philosophy of mind the fact that cognitive states involve phenomenal experience, or, as Auriol himself puts it, the distinctive feature of the cognitive is the fact that something appears to whatever is said to be cognitive; all cognition involves the appearing of something to someone or something. To this extent, Auriol was developing, I want to suggest, a theory of cognition in which what we today would call “consciousness” played the central role, so much so that one can say that consciousness is a more primitive feature in Auriol’s philosophy of mind than is either cognition or intentionality, the latter being explained by the former. Along the way, I will explore some of Auriol’s views on mental representation, mental acts, and intelligible species.

First, let me clarify what I intend to argue by specifying what I am *not* intending to argue. I am not going to try to claim that Peter Auriol has a compelling or even a coherent theory of consciousness. Although, as I mention below, Auriol does make statements that can be considered attempts at minimal criteria for classifying something as conscious, he does not have or attempt to develop an elaborate theory of consciousness along the lines of contemporary philosophers, cognitive psychologists, and brain researchers. Nor am I going to try to claim that Auriol “invented” consciousness or that he was the first to think of it; in fact, I am inclined to believe that many of Auriol’s contemporaries—for example, Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham—would have agreed with Auriol concerning the fact that something’s appearing to the cognizer is a necessary element in any cognition. Nevertheless, I also believe that Auriol’s contemporaries would have thought that appearing and awareness weren’t the really interesting part of the cognitive process, and I take as evidence for this claim the lack in their writings of detailed explicit

statements concerning this aspect of the cognitive process. On the basis of what they *do* write about at great length, I would argue further that what did interest Auriol's contemporaries was the actual mechanics of cognition, that is to say, what has to take place in order for reality to appear to us (the nature of the sensory and intellectual faculties and their relations to each other; whether there are cognitive mediators, and if so what sorts; the ontology of concepts, and so on), but not the appearance itself. So, I imagine his contemporaries saying to Auriol: "Yes, yes, awareness and being appeared to, that's all well and good; now let's move on to the important stuff." And this leads me to my final preliminary point: as we will see, like his contemporaries, Auriol was also highly interested in the mechanics of cognition, but, in contrast to those contemporaries, he shifted the emphasis in his theory of cognition away from the mechanics aspect (how we come to have cognition) to the awareness or consciousness aspect. For Auriol, the most important part of cognition—indeed, its defining feature—is precisely the fact that *x* appears to *y*, or, conversely, that *y* is conscious or aware of *x*. It is this change of emphasis that I want to maintain is important and innovative about Peter Auriol's theory of cognition, not least because what Auriol emphasizes became in the early modern period a central aspect of cognitive theory, and it remains so to this day.²

With those preliminary remarks, I would like first to give a short description of Auriol's ideas on the ontology of concepts. Auriol's claim, today quite well known, is that "in every intellection there emanates and proceeds nothing other than the cognized thing itself in a certain objective existence insofar as (*secundum quod*) it serves to terminate the intellect's gaze (*intuitum*)."³ Thus, for Auriol concepts *are* extramental particulars, but having a different type of existence—a different *modus essendi*—than the real existence they have extramentally. Auriol calls this special type of existence "intentional" or "objective"

2. The centrality of Auriol's theory of cognition to the medieval development of a theory of what we would call "consciousness" has already been suggested by Robert Pasnau in *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, vol. 3: *Mind and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 219, and more extensively explored in Joël Biard, "Intention and Presence: The Notion of *Presentialitas* in the Fourteenth Century," in Heinämaa, Lähteenmäki, and Remes, *Consciousness*, esp. 129–136.

3. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2: "in omni intellectione emanat et procedit, non aliquid aliud, sed ipsamet res cognita in quodam esse obiectivo, secundum quod habet terminare intuitum intellectus." *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 365–66; X 622a. For a discussion of Auriol's ideas on concepts and their formation, along with references to further literature, see Russell L. Friedman, "Peter Auriol," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2009 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/auriol>, esp. §§3–4. On Auriol's theory of intentionality per se, see most recently Fabrizio Amerini, "Realism and Intentionality: Hervaeus Natalis, Peter Aureoli, and William Ockham in Discussion," in *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, ed. S. Brown, T. Dewender, and T. Kobusch (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 239–260.

existence, or, most famously, *esse apparens*, apparent being.⁴ What characterizes this type of existence is that it is a particular extramental object, for example, Socrates, but indistinguishably mixed together with (*indistinguibiliter immiscetur*) passive conception, that is, the formation of a concept of Socrates. A concept of Socrates, then, is Socrates as conceived; it is Socrates as an object of the intellect.⁵ Upon intellectual acquaintance, Socrates as really existing is converted through the act of conception, that is, by being conceived, into Socrates as intentionally existing. Thus, for Auriol, Socrates and a concept grasping Socrates are the same thing with differing modes of existence. Now, when Auriol claims that Socrates and a concept of Socrates are “the same,” he means it in a very strict sense, even saying that “a thing and its intention do not differ numerically with respect to anything absolute”; they are numerically the same thing. What thing and concept differ by, says Auriol, is a respect or a relation; and this is no ordinary respect “fixed to or superimposed upon that thing, as are other relations, rather it is utterly intrinsic and indistinguishably joined to it.” This intrinsic relation, Auriol tells us, is the appearing of the thing (*apparere*) as an object of cognition to a cognizer.⁶ Hence, for Auriol, it is intrinsic to each and every thing to have two different modes of being: real or extramental being on the one hand, and intentional or objective being on the other. In contrast to its real being, the thing’s intentional being needs a cognizer in order to actualize it, since in intentional being the thing is appearing to the conceiver. Through the act of conceiving, then, a thing is put into intentional being and appears to the conceiver. It should be noted that Auriol describes the *esse apparens* or the thing in intentional being as “nothing in itself” (*nihil in se*) and as diminished being (*esse diminutum*). Making more precise what he means by this, Auriol, basing himself upon Aristotle and Averroes, draws a distinction between, on

4. See, e.g., Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2: “Relinquitur ergo ut detur septimum, scilicet quod [conceptus] sint verae rosae particulares et flores, non quidem ut existunt exterius, sed ut intentionaliter et obiective, et secundum esse formatum concurrunt in unum quid simpliciter, quod est praesens in intellectu per speciem intelligibilem vel per actum.” Electronic *Scriptum*, ll. 520–523; X 624b.

5. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 23: “obiectiva conceptio passive dicta non respicit rem per modum substrati, immo res quae concipitur est aliquid sui et immiscetur indistinguibiliter sibi. Unde conceptio rosae idem est quod rosa, et conceptus animalis idem quod animal. Iste nimirum conceptus claudit indistinguibiliter realitates omnium particularium animalium et quendam modum essendi, qui est intentionalis, qui non est aliud quam passiva conceptio.” In Dominik Perler, “Peter Aureol vs. Hervaeus Natalis on Intentionality: A Text Edition with Introductory Remarks,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 61 (1994): 227–262, at 248, §22.

6. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2: “considerandum est quod res in esse formato posita non claudit in se aliquid absolutum nisi ipsam realitatem. Unde non ponit in numerum res et sua intentio quantum ad aliquid absolutum, claudit tamen aliquid respectivum, videlicet apparere. Quod non debet intelligi ut affixum aut superpositum illi rei, sicut ceterae relationes, sed omnino intrinsicum et indistinguibiliter adunatum.” Electronic *Scriptum*, ll. 584–588; X 625a–b.

the one hand, pure nothings, existing neither in themselves nor in the soul, and, on the other, the type of mental being that intentional being is, that is, a being that is nothing in itself but exists in the soul as the object of the intellect or of another cognitive power.⁷

With Auriol's view of the cognitive process in mind, we can focus our attention on the central feature for Auriol in all cognition: the fact that something *appears*. This feature is the source of the most famous name that he gives to intentional existence: *esse apparens*, apparent being. As mentioned earlier, I think that in the medieval discussion over mental representation and intentionality, Auriol perhaps laid the most stress of anyone on what we would today probably call "phenomenal consciousness." In what follows, I want to show just *how* Auriol draws consciousness or awareness into the heart of his explanations for cognition, intentionality, and mental representation. Indeed, as I will argue, consciousness seems to be the most primitive feature of mind and the mental for Auriol. Thus, what makes a mental representation *mental* in the relevant way is the fact that it is involved in some *x* appearing to some *y*. For Auriol, if a representation existing in the mind is not involved in the occurrent appearance of something to a cognitive faculty, then it is *mental* only inasmuch as it exists in the mind, and in no more meaningful sense. The fact that appearing is going on is basic to Auriol's description of the cognitive.⁸

What does it mean for something to "understand" some thing, according to Peter Auriol? Or, more generally, what does it mean for something to cognize some thing? In d. 35, q. 1, of Auriol's *Scriptum*, the large commentary on I *Sentences* that he wrote mostly before he started lecturing at Paris in 1316–1318, Auriol discusses whether and how we can say that God understands (*intelligere*). Here, Auriol deals at length with the nature of intellectual cognition and of cognition in general. Much of this discussion is directed against Godfrey of Fontaines, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, and Durand of St. Pourçain, but I want to leave Auriol's specific criticisms of his contemporaries' theories basically to the side. The general problem that Auriol finds with all of the other solutions to the issue of what understanding (*intelligere*) is, is that

7. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2: "nullus dubitare debet qui noverit mentem Philosophi et Commentatoris sui quin aliqua sint nihil et non-entia simpliciter, quae tamen sunt entia secundum quid in anima cognitiva entitate quadam intentionali et diminuta. Hoc enim expresse dicit Philosophus, IX *Metaphysicae*, et Commentator exponit, com. 7, dicens quod entia quae non sunt extra animam non dicuntur esse simpliciter, sed dicuntur esse in anima cognitiva. Sic igitur nullum est inconveniens, si eo modo quo sunt, producantur; sunt autem in esse apparenti tantummodo, quod quidem stat cum nihilitate simpliciter, et relinquit entitatem in anima diminutam. Illa vero sunt nihil utroque modo quae nec sunt in se nec in anima obiective." *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 603–611; X 625b.

8. See Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 74: "Aureol in fact claims that being in the proper relationship to this *esse apparens* is both necessary and sufficient for being cognitive." (As evidence for this claim, Pasnau refers to the text in note 9.) On Auriol, see *ibid.*, 69–76.

they all postulate that it involves some specific type of thing, whether that is a passion (Godfrey) or an action (Aquinas), a quality (Scotus) or a relation (Durand). Auriol cannot see that any of these solutions can account for what we know happens in cognition, and he proposes a solution that is in many ways typical of his strategy in philosophical problem solving. For Auriol, the term “understanding” cannot signify a certain, determinate thing (taking “thing” broadly to include actions, passions, qualities, and relations), rather it is a *connotative* term for him. What this means is that directly (*in recto*) the term *intelligere* indicates no particular item (it indicates the univocal concept of being, which, for Auriol, is all things and all *rationes* (i.e., all basic units of conceptual acquaintance and content) wrapped up in one totally unexplicitated conceptual mass), but *intelligere* connotes or indicates indirectly (*in obliquo*) that the following situation obtains: something *appears* to whatever is said to understand.⁹ Thus, for Auriol, you can find understanding anywhere that one particular condition is met, that is, the condition that something appears to the person or thing who is said to understand. To illustrate this, Auriol claims that

if nothing were to appear objectively to someone’s mind, no one will say that that person understands something, rather he or she will be in a state similar to those who sleep . . . and similarly, if through a picture on a wall, Caesar depicted [in the picture] would appear to the wall, then the wall would be said to cognize Caesar depicted. Thus, it manifestly appears that the formal meaning of understanding, or of cognizing in general, is nothing more than “having something present through the mode of appearing.”¹⁰

Wherever there is *appearing* going on, even if that were (very much counterfactually) in a wall, there we would say that cognition is going on. Appearing is the hallmark of the cognitive and of cognition. Wall example aside, Auriol in fact basically sets up an equivalency between the possession of life and life forces, on the one hand, and appearing and cognition, on the other: since cognition only happens when there is appearing going on, and appearing only happens

9. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1: “Prima siquidem est quod intelligere formaliter non includit determinate aliquid in recto, sed solum connotat aliquid ut apparens illi quod dicitur intelligere. . . . Sed manifestum est quod a quacumque re tollitur ne sit quoddam habere aliquid praesens per modum apparentis, ab illa tollitur ne sit formaliter intelligere; cuicumque vero hoc competit, illud dicitur quoddam comprehendere. Si enim menti nostrae nihil appareat obiective, nullus dicit se aliquid intelligere, immo erit in dispositione simili dormienti, ut Philosophus dicit XII Metaphysicae. Similiter etiam si per picturam in pariete existentem, Caesar pictus appareret parieti, paries diceretur cognoscere Caesarem pictum. Ergo manifeste apparet quod non est plus de formali ratione ipsius intelligere, aut cognoscere in universalis, nisi habere aliquid praesens per modum apparentis.” Electronic *Scriptum* ll. 320–321, 326–336; X 751b–752a. On Auriol’s views concerning the concept of being, see, e.g., Friedman “Peter Aureol,” §2.2, and especially the literature referred to there.

10. See the italicized text in note 9.

where there is life or a vital force, only living things can be cognitive and all cognition requires a life force of some kind. Auriol says,

we have to consider that the likeness alone of the thing is not sufficient in order to put a thing into apparent being . . . otherwise species in the air would put color into apparent and intentional being, and similarly [species] existing in the sensory memory would make the thing appear, and this is false. Thus, since appearing is a type of vital being (*quoddam esse vitale*), no thing can hold such being except with a vital force acting along with it.¹¹

Ignoring the fact that Auriol here (and elsewhere) appears to have forgotten plants, his intuition seems to be one that most people would share: we have a difficult time thinking about air or outer space cognizing things just because there are sensible species or radio waves in them. It is not entirely clear whether anyone in the Middle Ages did in fact hold the view that the medium is cognitive simply because it has sensible species in it, nor, if someone did hold the view, how it was to have been understood.¹² But for Auriol, the view is nonsense: cognition happens when something appears to someone, and that involves a

11. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1: "considerandum quod sola rei similitudo non sufficit ad ponendum res in esse apparenti . . . alioquin species in aere poneret colorem in esse apparenti et intentionali, et similiter existens in memoria sensitiva faceret res apparere, quod falsum est. Unde cum apparere sit quoddam esse vitale, nulla res potest capere tale esse, nisi concurrente virtute vitali. Unde necesse est quod intellectus informatus rei similitudine sit unum sufficiens principium et una causa totalis apparentiae obiectivae." *Electronic Scriptum* ll. 683–689; X 757a. For discussion of the view presented in the italicized text, see notes 17–26.

12. There is some disagreement in the modern literature concerning whether Thomas Aquinas held, or at least is implicitly committed to, the view that the medium is in some sense cognitive because of the existence in it of sensible species. Thus, Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, 12–13, 31–60, esp. 47–60, and Peter King, "Rethinking Representation in the Middle Ages: A Vade-Mecum to Medieval Theories of Mental Representation," in *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 81–100, esp. 84–85, have both argued that Aquinas was committed to the view, and this because, for Aquinas, (1) the medium receives a form according to spiritual alteration (receiving the form of something without becoming that thing), and (2) the mark of the cognizant is the ability to have more than one form; ergo (3) the medium in some way or another is cognizant (and Aquinas even calls air "perceptive"). On the other hand, Gyula Klima has argued against assigning the view to Aquinas, drawing a distinction between a carrier of information (e.g., air) and a cognizer of information (e.g., a human being); see Klima, "Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Theories of Mental Representation," in *Mental Representation*, ed. G. Klima and A. Hall (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 7–16. For my present purposes, whether Aquinas held this view or not is immaterial, I merely want to stress that Auriol decisively rejects it (for another rejection of particularly Pasnau's view, see John P. O'Callaghan, "Aquinas, Cognitive Theory, and Analogy: A Proposal of Robert Pasnau's Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76 (2002): 451–482, esp. 469–473, with a reply by Pasnau in "What Is Cognition? A Reply to Some Critics," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76 (2002): 483–490. Auriol may have picked up this line of thought from John Duns Scotus; see for Scotus's use of it, Giorgio Pini's essay in the present volume.

living, vital force—in the case of intellectual cognition, an intellect. Moreover, even with a representation existing in the mind, some type of *mental* representation, like a species existing in the sensory memory, that representation on its own cannot serve to make something appear to us: there has to be something more than simply the representation, and Auriol will insist that the “something more” is some activity of a cognitive power. Thus, moving to the case of the intellect, Auriol tells us that the intellect can be informed by a mental representation (a likeness, *similitudo*) and yet the thing represented by the likeness might well not appear to the intellect so informed. The thinker’s gaze (*acies cogitantis, intuitus, conspectus*), what we would today call *attention*, is in some way distinct from the intellect informed by the mental representation, and both are necessary for the represented thing to appear to the thinker. Indeed, Auriol claims that the gaze of the mind is the very intentional action that constitutes the putting of a thing into *esse apparens*, and this is a step added onto the mind’s being in possession of a representation of the object. Thus, according to Auriol, when the thinker’s gaze rests on the intellect informed by a particular mental representation, that represented thing then appears to the thinker; when, under the command of our will, our attention shifts to another mental representation in the intellect, whatever is represented by that then appears: “the intentional action that comes about from the intellect informed by the species is subject to the power of the will, not with respect to its total suspension, but with respect to its alternation.” To bring this point home, Auriol brings up a fact that can be expressed in the following example: we can be walking around in a crowded street, but thinking so intensely of something else—say, a mathematical proof—that we do not even register the many sensory images that are impinging upon us; this is because our attention is not alighting on those sensed objects—the cart rolling by, the children screaming—and hence they are not *appearing* to us. Even with our eyes wide open, it is possible for us to remain uncognizant of our environment because our mind’s gaze is elsewhere.¹³

13. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1: “Illa namque similitudo cum intellectu sufficit ad faciendum rem praesentem et apparentem, cum similitudinis sit praesentare et absens praesentialiter exhibere. Quod ergo dicitur non esse possibile apparentiam de novo fieri sine acquisitione alicuius realis, dicendum quod intellectus informatus similitudine potest ab huiusmodi apparentia separari, quamvis sit intentionalis. Quod patet multipliciter. Tum quia in visu separantur, recipit enim quandoque videns ab obiecto qualitatem illam, quae non est aliud quam visio, et tamen obiectum non apparet nec iudicatur, sicut quilibet experitur dum oculos habens apertos, de alio considerat; quod enim tunc recipiat visionem patet ex hoc quod sensibile agit in visum; actio autem sensibilis et qualitas visibilis idem sunt. . . . Tum quia species vel similitudo habet repraesentare obiectum et exhibere praesens praesentia intentionali tantum; nullus autem negat quin absolutum speciei possit separari ab actu repraesentandi, qui est pure intentionalis. . . . Ex quibus patet quod res in esse apparenti et formato posita habet modum intentionalem ex natura ipsius animae. Actio igitur intentionalis, quae provenit ab intellectu specie informato, redigitur sub potestate voluntatis, non quidem quantum ad sus-

I want to make two points about this theory. The first is that the example that Auriol introduces here seems to allow for a rudimentary criterion for recognizing that something is conscious: it is able *not* to register its environment. Take a thermometer: most everyone would agree that a thermometer is not conscious, and yet it has the ability to register one certain fact about its environment. Auriol can at least be read to suggest here that a rock bottom reason why a thermometer cannot be said to be conscious is that, unless it is broken, it cannot help but register its environment in precisely the same way it always has. This in contrast to the much more complex system that a human being represents, where examples abound of our ability to not register our environment. It is a crude criterion, and by no means sufficient (although perhaps necessary); but an attempt at a criterion it does seem to be.¹⁴ A second point is that the only thing that likenesses or representations, mental or otherwise, do, according to Auriol, are *present* something to you.¹⁵ They cannot in and of themselves make anything appear. Thus, when we have a cognitive power informed by a representation, the offer is there, but actual cognition requires still more: it requires that something *appear* to you, that is, that you are conscious of it. And this is where the thinker's gaze and the will as directive of our intentional awareness comes into the picture; they are the final element in our coming to conscious awareness of this or of that.

To sum up: Putting something into intentional being, and hence making it appear to yourself, has to do with the nature of the soul and it involves the will. We can look at Auriol's cognitive theory as presented thus far as answering two different questions, a general and a specific one. The general question is why do we (in this case) understand or have intellectual cognition; the specific

pensionem totalem, sed quantum ad alternationem. . . . Secundum hoc ergo formatio obiecti atque positio in esse apparenti, quae non est aliud quam acies cogitantis vel intuitus seu conspectus, potest separari ab intellectu informato similitudine rei. Non est enim impossibile quod actus intentionalis sive repraesentare vel facere apparere obiectum sit quodam modo voluntarium, et ideo Augustinus dicit frequenter quod voluntas copulat aciem cogitantis cum forma sive cum obiecto formato. Quod ergo dicitur non posse de novo fieri talem formationem intentionalem nisi realis qualitas aliqua acquiratur, non est verum, sicut patet." Electronic Scriptum II. 696–727; X 757a–b. The last sentence of the passage shows that Auriol is here dealing with intellectual memory, how we can have repeated intellectual cognitions of something without the necessity of acquiring a new real representation of that thing each and every time. Auriol played an important role in disambiguating the term *intentio*, so that it was confined only to mental appearances; see on this esp. Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology and the Foundation of Semantics, 1250–1345* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 93–98.

14. For the thermometer example and discussion of it, I thank Peter King. Of course, even this point about a thermometer not being conscious might meet with disagreement: for instance, David Chalmers (*The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) considers the possibility that a thermostat has experiences in virtue of its being an information-processing system.

15. See, e.g., the texts in notes 13 and 39–40.

question is why do we understand this as opposed to that. With regard to the general question, Auriol would claim that it is precisely because our intellects have the ability to be appeared to (to be conscious of certain phenomena) that we are able to have intellectual cognition in the first place; consciousness, for Auriol, is a more primitive feature of mind than is cognition (or intentionality), since the former explains the latter. In answer to the specific question, Auriol would say that it is because our will guides our attention to one thing or another (what we should be conscious of) that we understand either this or that.¹⁶

In another context, in d. 9, q. 1 of his *Scriptum*, Auriol looks at the issue of “saying” or the formation of the divine word, and, in true medieval fashion, he models his description of divine saying on the way he thinks that concepts are formed in human beings. Hence he deals here with the necessary and sufficient condition for our forming a concept or putting a thing in intentional being (these are equivalent for him). According to Auriol, this is what happens:

In us “to say” names the intellective power informed by a real likeness of the object, insofar as through the likeness the thing cognized holds formed and apparent being. Thus, the active formation is called “diction” or “locution.” But [the term] “intellection” names the same power with the same likeness, as it is that to which [something else] is an object, or that to which [something else] is formed and posited, so that it shines and makes apparent. Thus, it is clear how, in understanding, the mind speaks to itself, for it expresses to itself the thing that it forms.¹⁷

This is Auriol’s first stab at the intellectual process that is the immediate source of the mental word or concept: the cognitive power, informed by some real likeness of the object of cognition, says the word, which is the object of cognition in intentional or apparent being, and this saying of the word is called *dictio* or *locutio*. The same cognitive power, informed by the same real likeness, is also that to which the intentional object *appears*, and when this happens we have *intellectio*, and we are said to understand. The mind, as Auriol tells us in the preceding

16. See, e.g., the text in note 13. Of course, Auriol’s answer to the specific question immediately raises at least one question of its own: how does the will direct us to become conscious of something of which we are *not* presently conscious. This (and the nature of attention more generally) is a major issue in recent discussions of consciousness, but only more research will uncover whether Auriol has a position on it.

17. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: “Ex praemissis ergo colligitur quid sit dicere et intelligere in nobis et quid etiam in divinis. In nobis quidem ‘dicere’ nominat intellectivam potentiam informatam reali similitudine obiecti, in quantum per eam capit res cognitae esse formatum et apparens; unde illa activa formatio, ‘dictio’ seu ‘locutio’ appellatur. ‘Intellectio’ vero nominat eandem potentiam cum eadem similitudine, prout est id cui obicitur, seu formatur et ponitur, ut luceat et appareat. Unde patet quomodo intelligendo mens loquitur sibi ipsi: exprimit enim sibi rem quam format.” Electronic *Scriptum*, ll. 580–585; X 323b. The Augustinian turn of phrase (that I have been unable to locate in Augustine) “mens loquitur sibi ipsi,” is one of Auriol’s typical sayings; see, e.g., also note 31.

quotation, speaks to itself. Now, Auriol describes the cognitive power informed by the real likeness of the object in several ways: at times he calls it the “absolute of intellection” (*absolutum intellectionis*), but he also calls it the intellectual act,¹⁸ and it is through this intellectual act that the intentional object, the object of cognition in apparent being, is both formed (*dictio*) and appears to us (*intellectio*). Thus, there are two moments in every intellectual act for Auriol: there is *dictio*, the production of the thing in apparent being, and there is *intellectio*, the “reading” of that same intentional object by the same intellectual act that produced it.¹⁹ I want now to discuss some of Auriol’s ideas on the intellectual act, why it is the “absolute of intellection,” and how it relates to the intentional object.

Why must the intellectual act be something absolute, and what does that mean anyway? Auriol is clearly using “absolute” here to mean something with subjective being in the soul, that is, something that in and of itself has some being. His major reason for claiming this is clearly that the absolute of intellection is what grounds the diminished being that it causes: since *esse apparens* or intentional being is, as we have seen, nothing in itself (*nihil in se*), it has to have a basic causal dependency on some real being or it wouldn’t exist at all, “neither in itself nor in anything else,” as Auriol puts it.²⁰ The mental being that it depends on, in Auriol’s view, is the mental act, which hence has to have some real subjective being of its own. Moreover, just as Caesar couldn’t have “depicted being”—that is, Caesar couldn’t be understood from a picture of Caesar—unless there were in fact some *real* picture of Caesar, so it works in the intellect: There cannot be apparent being without its depending upon some real likeness of the object with its own subjective being existing in the intellect.²¹

Of course, one might reply to this that respects, that is to say, relational entities, can also have real being. So, why couldn’t the source of the intentional

18. E.g. in the texts in notes 29 and 30, and more diffusely, 31 and 32.

19. The term “reading” here is mine, but is based on the common medieval etymology (a variation of which is offered by Auriol at, e.g., *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1, *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 546–547, X 323a) that understanding is an internal reading (*intelligere* as *intus legere* or *intellectio* as *intus lectio*).

20. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: “res non potest habere tale esse apparens nisi ratione alicuius absoluti realis existentis in intellectu: omne namque deminutum reducitur ad aliquid reale, alioquin nihil esset et in se et in alio. Sed res in esse apparenti sive rei apparitio est omnino quid deminutum; unde nihil est in se. Ergo necesse est quod sit aliquod reale in intellectu, ratione cuius dicatur esse.” *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 364–369; X 320b. On the diminished ontological status of the *esse apparens*, see also the text in note 7.

21. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: “Praeterea, sicut se habet realis pictura ad esse pictum, sic se videtur habere realis apparitio ad dare esse apparens. Sed numquam Caesar caperet esse pictum nisi quatenus est aliqua realis pictura. Ergo nec res erunt apparentes intellectui nisi quatenus est aliqua formalis apparitio et realis in intellectu.” *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 370–373; X 320b. Interestingly, Auriol seems to use the term *apparitio* here in a different sense than he does in, e.g., notes 20, 29, 30, and 31. There the *apparitio* refers to the appearing of an object of cognition to a cognizer, here it is a likeness with real being, which is a necessary condition for a cognitive appearing to take place.

object's diminished being be a respect and not an absolute at all? Auriol's arguments against the intellectual act being relational in nature boil down to the claim that likeness, and relations in general, are not the kinds of items that can bring about cognition. In particular, no similarity relationship makes one thing appear to another: for instance, by the very fact that they are similar to one another, one white thing does not appear to another.²² Auriol seems to be assuming here that the only relevant kind of relation is a likeness or similarity relation, and that this type of relation in and of itself is insufficient to get cognition off the ground. It requires more than just similarity or likeness to make something *appear* to someone, and for Auriol, as we have seen, appearing, conscious experience, is what cognition is all about.

Thus, we need to have some absolute in the intellect that serves as the necessary foundation of the diminished being of the *esse apparens* that is itself necessary for actual intellectual cognition. What is that absolute?

What makes cognized things appear is something absolute. But it cannot be maintained that it is a quality alone or a species or an operation from the genus of quality. For if it were a species, then the medium in which species are received would be able to comprehend, and things would appear to it, and that's false. But if it were an operation from the genus of quality, like "to light" or "to be white," then to light would put the thing in apparent being, and there would be just as good a construction when you said "I light you" or "I white you" as when you say "I understand you." Therefore it is not a quality alone through which things hold apparent being objectively. Further, it cannot be said that it is a quality [along] with a respect to an object. Both because the species has both [of these], even as it exists in the medium; and because it's been explained that the respect of likeness does not make things appear, otherwise Caesar would appear to a wall through a picture [of Caesar on that wall], which is false. What we are left with, then, is that the absolute from which objective knowledge arises is a conjunction of the intellective potency and the likeness. For the potency on its own account does not put things into formed being, and neither does the likeness, or any quality whatsoever, but both at once give birth to objective knowledge or put the thing into apparent being.²³

22. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: "Hoc autem impossibile est, quod [intellectio actus] sit purus respectus. . . . Tum quia nulla similitudo quae sit respectus vel relatio facit res apparere, est enim similitudo inter duo alba, et inter iustitiam existentem in voluntate unius iusti et alterius, et similiter inter grammaticam unius grammatici et alterius, nec tamen ista similitudo facit grammaticam aut iustitiam alterius apparere. Tum quia similitudo-relatio maior est inter duas animas vel inter duas albedines, cum sint eiusdem speciei, quam inter ipsam albedinem et speciem illius in oculo existentem, istae nempe non sunt eiusdem speciei; claret autem quod anima non facit apparere animam, nec albedo albedinem; unde relinquitur quod relatio similitudinis non facit res intellectui apparere." *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 374–384; X 320b.

23. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: "Restat ergo ut illud quod facit res cognitatas apparere sit aliquid absolutum: istud autem poni non potest quod sit qualitas sola, sive species, sive

The first thing worth noticing about this rich passage is that toward the end of it, Auriol tells us explicitly that the absolute of intellection is, as we also saw above,²⁴ the intellectual power together with a likeness of the object of intellection; these make up one conjoined or composite absolute of intellection that puts the object of intellection into apparent being, making it appear as an intentional object to the absolute of intellection itself. Indeed, here Auriol seems to tell us specifically that the likeness of the thing is a quality (*similitudo, aut qualitates quaecumque*).²⁵ But no quality, whether a species or something else, could ever on its own make things appear. As we have seen, that requires life and the capacity to be appeared to, and Auriol appeals in this passage to some of his favorite examples of why a species on its own account could not bring about cognition; if that were the case, then the medium would be cognizant, and a wall could understand Caesar in virtue of the fact that he is painted on it. All of this pushes Auriol to say that, in order to bring about intellectual cognition, in order to make something appear to our intellect, the likeness of the thing found in the intellect must be conjoined with the intellectual power. For a positive reason that an *intellectual power* must be involved in intellectual cognition, Auriol resorts basically to his view that only living things can have comprehension of any type, and hence in order to have intellectual cognition, or in order for things to appear to the intellect, there has to be a living being with an intellect: no nonvital nature can constitute something in apparent being.²⁶ On the other hand, the reason that he gives for a *likeness* of the thing being involved in cognition is based on what looks to be a standard notion of assimilation: the only way that an extramental thing can be united to the mind is through the existence of the thing's

operatio de genere qualitatis. Si enim esset species, tunc medium in quo recipiuntur species esset comprehensivum, et sibi res apparent, quod falsum est. Si vero esset operatio de genere qualitatis ut lucere et albere, tunc lucere poneret res in esse apparenti, et esset bona constructio dicendo "luceo te" vel "albeo te," sicut dicendo "intelligo te"; non est igitur sola qualitas illud quo res capiunt esse apparens obiective. Ulterius non potest dici quod sit qualitas cum respectu ad obiectum: tum quia species habet utrumque, etiam prout existit in medio; tum quia declaratum est quod respectus similitudinis non facit res apparere, alias per picturam appareret Caesar parieti, quod est falsum. Relinquitur ergo quod sit illud absolutum a quo oritur notitia obiectiva coniunctum quoddam ex potentia intellectiva et ex similitudine ipsa. Nec enim potentia per se ipsam ponit res in esse formato, nec similitudo, aut qualitas quaecumque, sed utrumque simul parit notitiam obiectivam sive ponit res in esse apparenti." Electronic Scriptorum, ll. 385–397; X 320b–321a.

24. See notes 11, 13, 17, and 26.

25. Compare the final sentence of the quotation in note 13.

26. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: "Secundo vero idem patet quia esse apparens, quod capit res per intellectionem et visionem, est proprium rei comprehensivae et vitam habentis, nulli enim naturae res apparent nisi sit comprehensiva; unde illud est proprie susceptio formae sine materia. Nulla ergo natura non-vitalis potest constituere res in esse apparenti. Oritur ergo apparitio obiectiva simul ab utroque, videlicet a potentia et impressa similitudine." Electronic Scriptorum, ll. 406–410; X 321a. See also note 11.

likeness there.²⁷ Of course, it goes nearly without saying that the intellectual potency completely on its own cannot bring about intellectual cognition, because if it could, then it could understand all things without any input from the extramental world, and this is tantamount to a theory of innate ideas (Auriol uses this argument against Durand of St. Pourçain on several occasions).²⁸

Thus, Auriol's position on the absolute of intellection is that:

The act of intellection does not name the likeness alone nor one simple form, but a composite of the power and the likeness of the thing, for both constitute the intellection, because neither the likeness alone nor the power alone is the intellection, but both at once, and from both is born the appearing (*apparitio*) of the object or its intentional presence and objective shining out.²⁹

How does this work in detail? Auriol argues that the absolute of intellection, the intellectual act, which is the intellect informed by the real likeness of the object, and is in fact a composite of the intellectual power and that likeness, has a twofold relation to the intentional object. Auriol says:

the actual knowledge that indicates the composite of the thing's likeness and the intellective power has two separate respects to the thing put objectively into intentional being. And the first respect belongs to the genus of action,

27. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: "Tertio quoque patet idem, quia partus debet assimilari ei a quo nascitur: notitia vero obiectiva est res in quodam esse intentionali posita, et in esse prospecto, quapropter oritur a re ipsa, et a prospiciente anima. Res autem non facit idem cum anima nisi per similitudinem suam. Quare relinquatur ut conceptus seu partus mentis oriatur ab utroque." *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 411–414; X 321a.

This seems to be Auriol's general reason for positing the real existence of likenesses in cognition, since a similar notion of assimilation is to be found in Auriol's *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: "Anima per unam potentiam est assimilabilis obiecto mediante unica tantum similitudine; sed per nullam aliam potentiam quam per intellectum anima assimilatur rei intellectae; igitur mediante unica tantum similitudine; sed illa est ipse actus; igitur intellectus non est alia similitudo obiecti quam actus ipse." Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 47va; ed. Rome 1605, p. 128a. For discussion of the issues addressed in this text from Auriol's *II Sent.*, see at notes 38–49.

28. For an example of Auriol's use of this argument against Durand, see R. L. Friedman, "Peter Auriol versus Durand of St. Pourçain on Intellectual Cognition." *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales/Studies in Medieval Theology and Philosophy/Forschungen zur Theologie und Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 2014.

29. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: "Ex quo patet quod intellectio actus non nominat solam similitudinem nec unam formam simplicem, sed compositum ex potentia et ex similitudine rei, ambo enim constituunt intellectionem, quia sola similitudo non est intellectio, nec sola potentia, sed simul utrumque et ab utroque paritur obiecti apparitio sive praesentia intentionalis et relucencia obiectiva. . . . Unde decipiuntur, qui quaerunt intellectionem tamquam unam formam simplicem, cum sit quoddam compositum ex duobus, quorum unum est potentia, reliquum complementum. Utrum autem ista similitudo sit species, aut oporteat speciem ponere praeter similitudinem quae est pars actus, locum habebit in secundo libro. Unde ad praesens haec inquis[it]io relinquatur." *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 415–425; X 321a–b. For a consideration of the view expressed in the untranslated part of this text, see at note 36.

the second to the genus of relation. For such an appearing as an object (*obiectalis apparitio*) [1] arises efficiently from the power and the likeness informing it, i.e. the two items that constitute the act of intellection, and [2] arises inside the power so informed.³⁰

The intellectual act relates directly in two very different ways to one and the same intentional object, that is, the thing in apparent being: the intellection has a respect (*habitus*) of (as we will see, *metaphorical*) efficient causality because it produces the intentional object through an intentional production; it also has a relational respect to that same intentional object as that *to which* the intentional object appears. Thus, one and the same intellectual act has, as we saw, two moments: *dictio*, the production of the intentional object (putting the thing into *esse apparens*), and *intellectio*, the appearing of the intentional object to the very same intellectual act that produced it. Each of these moments involves a separate respect of the intellectual act to the intentional object.

Auriol offers several arguments as to why the intellectual act needs this twofold respect to the intentional object. For example, since the concept, as all would agree, remains within the conceiver, it depends on the act of the intellect in two ways: efficiently as a product of that act, and “contentwise” (*contentive*) as what is contained within the act. The intentional object is both produced by the act and serves as its content, and the latter in virtue of the fact that it is literally contained in the act of the mind producing it. A second argument is simply in keeping with Auriol’s often used phrase that the mind speaks to itself (*mens loquitur sibi ipsi*): for this reason, the same act of intellection through which the intentional object, the thing in apparent being, is formed, is also the act to which the intentional object appears. Finally, because everything that appears, appears to someone or something (otherwise it wouldn’t be appearing in the first place), the act of the intellect is both that in virtue of which the object understood appears (or takes on apparent being) and that to which the object appears. Basically, what produces the object in intentional being must also read or be appeared to by that object; because the object is contained within the act, there is nothing else to which the object could so appear. In this way, Auriol deduces the intellectual act’s twofold respect to the intentional object, that is, the object of cognition in *esse apparens*.³¹

30. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: “Quod intellectio actus duplicem habitudinem habet ad rem positam in esse apparenti. Tertia quoque propositio est quod notitia actualis quae dicit compositum ex similitudine rei et ex intellectiva potentia, istud inquam sub duplici habitudine respicit rem positam obiective in esse intentionali. Et est prima habitudo de genere actionis, secunda vero de genere relationis. Talis namque apparitio obiectalis et oritur effective a potentia et a similitudine informante, quae duo constituunt actum intellectionis, et oritur intra potentiam sic informatam.” *Electronic Scriptum*, ll. 427–432; X 321b.

31. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: “Primo quidem, quoniam res posita in esse apparenti dicitur concipi per actum intellectus, immo est conceptus intellectualis. Conceptus autem

In elaborating this view, quite interesting are Auriol's attempts to defend the difference in two ontological levels that he maintains exist in one and the same intellect: the intellection itself being an absolute, something with *real* existence, while the concept produced through it and necessarily dependent upon it having merely *intentional* or *diminished* existence. Thus some unnamed opponent objects to Auriol's theory that, since any absolute can be conceived without a respect, and since the intellect's act is something absolute (i.e., the composite of power and the object's real likeness), therefore the intellect's act can be conceived without its own relational activity, that is to say, without the production of the object in *esse apparens* and the reading or appearance of that object to the same act. In answer, Auriol flatly denies that this can be the case: "The act of the intellect can only be conceived as making the thing appear objectively."³² The intellectual act and its activity, then, are so intimately linked that the one cannot even be thought to exist without the other. Indeed, although Auriol seems to consistently maintain that the act of the intellect always produces an intentional object, that is, the thing in *esse apparens*, nevertheless he also insists that the intentional production does not necessarily result in the thing appearing to us, because the intellect might not have conscious access to its own intentional production and "reading." We have already seen this suggested when Auriol maintained that "attention" or the thinker's gaze was something separate from the intellectual act (the intellect informed by the mental representation) and could be guided by our will to alternate between one object and the next.³³ Thus, although Auriol thinks that a distinction can indeed be drawn in the various moments in the process of intellectual cognition, nevertheless the distinction he draws is very different from the one suggested by his anonymous opponent: the opponent claims that an act of the intellect can be conceived (and hence can exist) without its activity, while Auriol claims that act

remanet intra concipientem, et est a concipiente. Ergo res ut apparens dependet ab actu intellectus effective et per modum producti, et contentive et per modum contenti.

Secundo vero, quia formando huiusmodi conceptum mens dicitur sibi loqui, et per consequens ille conceptus habet habitudinem ad mentem loquentem, et ad eandem mentem, tamquam ad id cui locutio fit.

Tertio autem, quia omne quod apparet, alicui apparet, et omne quod lucet, alicui dicitur lucere; talis autem conceptus dicitur apparitio et relucencia quaedam; habet ergo habitudinem ad intellectum in actu tamquam ad id cui lucet et cui apparet. Constat autem quod habet habitudinem tamquam ad id cuius virtute est, ut declaratum est supra quod relucencia obiectiva non est nisi propter realem relucenciam, quae est actus. Ergo patet quod res posita in esse intentionalis, dupliciter se habet ad actum intellectus, videlicet quia virtute eius lucet, et quia sibi lucet." Electronic Scriptum, ll. 434–447; X 321b. For *mens loquitur sibi ipsi*, see note 17.

32. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: "Omne enim absolutum potest concipi absque respectu. Sed actus intellectus, qui resultat ex potentia et ex reali similitudine obiecti, est aliquid absolutum. Ergo poterit intelligi sine respectu activitatis . . . actus intellectus concipi non potest nisi ut faciens res obiective apparere." Electronic Scriptum, ll. 456–458, 495; X 321b–322a.

33. On the thinker's gaze, see note 13.

and both aspects of its activity (production and “reading”) are inseparable, although we may indeed not be conscious of the results of the act’s activity. There can be situations, Auriol seems to want to say, in which we are blocked conscious access to the act’s activity, but the intellectual act and both its moments are, for Auriol, a package deal: if there is an intellectual act, it involves both an intentional production and “reading.” We will return to this below where I suggest a way of making sense of Auriol’s hints. In response to another objection to his view, an objection stating that since the thing in apparent being is nothing, and since pure nothing can be the object of no production, the thing in apparent being cannot be produced, Auriol maintains that the production of something in diminished, intentional being is a “metaphorical” production. Thus, just as a real product is produced by a real action, a merely intentional product is produced by a “metaphorical” intentional action.³⁴

Thus far, then, we have seen that Auriol claims that the intellectual act, the absolute act of intellection, is the intellectual power informed by some representation or likeness. The intellectual act cannot exist without its activity, and this activity comprises two respects: both a production of the intentional object and a reading of that same intentional object. When the thinker’s gaze or attention is fixed on a particular object of intellection, that object becomes available to conscious thought because it appears to the thinker. And Auriol strictly links the thinker’s gaze with the appearing of the object to the thinker. Consciousness, for Auriol, is thus the mark of the cognitive, and is a more primitive explanatory feature than either cognition or intentionality.

This account, however, might lead us to ask Auriol just what *is* the representation in the intellect? Is it, for instance, an intelligible species?³⁵ Auriol had in fact anticipated this question, and at several junctures in his discussion of this material in the *Scriptum* version of his commentary on the first book of the

34. Auriol, *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1: “omnia verba ista videntur phantasie, quod enim nihil est, produci non potest. Res in esse apparenti nihil sunt, ut supra dictum est. Ergo produci non possunt, nec intellectio habet annexam aliquam activitatem. . . . Tertia quoque deficit, quia res in esse apparenti nihil est in se nisi deminute et metaphorice, eo modo quo entia rationis dicuntur esse; et ea quae non sunt simpliciter, sunt in anima. . . . Sicut ergo res in esse apparenti est tantum metaphorice, sic actio [qua] formatur est metaphorica.” Electronic *Scriptum*, ll. 461–463, 513–514, 517–518; X 321b–322b.

35. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 95 n. 30, considers erroneous the claim made by Faustino Prezioso and Gedeon Gál that Auriol rejected intelligible species; Dominik Perler, “Peter Aureol vs. Hervaeus Natalis,” 239 n. 37, supports her. As will be clear, I agree that Auriol creates some space in his theory for using the term “intelligible species,” but I also think that, at least in his *II Sent.*, he has effectively emptied the term of most of the significance it had for his contemporaries. For Auriol, all there are in the intellect are acts, some of which are not consciously registered. If you want to use the term “intelligible species” to describe those acts that are not consciously registered, this will not upset Auriol. But this is very far from a normal understanding of intelligible species. Auriol deals with similar issues in a somewhat different way in his magisterial *Quodl.*, q. 8, a. 3 (ed. 1605, 81–88, esp. 85–88); see note 50 for some remarks on the quodlibetal text.

Sentences, he promises that in the second book of the *Sentences* he will return to the issue of whether for his theory of intellectual cognition to work there has to be an intelligible species in addition to the intellectual act.³⁶ Clearly there has to be a likeness or representation, but are *both* the species and the act necessary? And one could ask further: what is the relation between the act and the intellectual power? True to his word, Auriol takes up this issue in his II *Sentences*, d. 11, part 3, q. 1, in a text that can be accurately described as Auriol's parallel text to Ockham's *Reportatio* II, qq. 12–13. Here Auriol rejects, in rather explicit opposition to Scotus, that intelligible species are either (1) a necessary prerequisite or necessary corequisite for the intellectual act or (2) an endpoint of the intellectual act. Auriol's conclusion is that "species and intellection, both in angels and us, are really (*realiter*) the same as the act of understanding."³⁷ In order to understand the view that Auriol is endorsing here, something needs to be clarified about his use of the term "intellection" or *intellectio*. In normal scholastic parlance, *intellectio* is a synonym for *actus intellectus* or *actus intelligendi*, and Auriol uses the term in this way as well, although when he does so, he often uses the phrase *intellectio realis* (e.g., note 46): this is an *intellectio* with real being, that is, the intellect's act. But as we have seen from *Scriptum*, d. 9, q. 1, Auriol also uses the term *intellectio* to denote the second respect that the act of understanding has to the intentional object, that is, the reading of the intentional object or the appearing of the intentional object to the intellectual act; we can call this the "intentional *intellectio*." With that terminology in mind, Auriol's view is that the species, the real *intellectio*, and the intellectual act are the same in their reality (*realiter*), they are the same real item; but he thereby holds open the possibility that they differ in some other, less-than-real way.

Auriol's main argument for the view that species and intellectual act are really the same—one he uses specifically against Scotus's theory of intellectual cognition—is that there are never two likenesses of the same type in the same power at the same time: if these two likenesses were completely the same, then one would clearly be redundant, but if one of the two likenesses were more perfect than the other, then the less perfect one would certainly be superfluous, roughly like both tepidness and extreme heat being in the same glass of water.³⁸

36. See, e.g., the text in note 29, and compare what Auriol says at the end of the text in note 4.

37. See note 38.

38. Auriol, II *Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1 ("Utrum in intellectu angeli species et intellectio realiter distinguantur"): "Quoad primum pono propositionem istam, quod species et intellectio tam in nobis quam in angelis est realiter idem quod actus intelligendi. Hanc propositionem proba rationibus quibusdam. Prima haec: impossibile est respectu eiusdem ponere duas similitudines realiter differentes, et hoc respectu eiusdem et in eodem; sed species est quaedam similitudo perfecta rei, et intellectio similiter; igitur impossibile est quod species et intellectio differant realiter. Maior patet, quia illae duae similitudines [1] vel essent distinctae solum numeraliter, et si sic, tunc duo accidentia eiusdem speciei essent in eodem, [2] aut erunt alterius rationis, et si sic unum erit perfectius altero, et [in] virtute continebit ipsum sicut

This is precisely what Auriol thinks obtains with regard to the species and the act: the purpose of a species is “to represent the object and make the object present to the intellect,”³⁹ and that’s also the purpose of the act.⁴⁰ Indeed, Auriol claims that it is “not so clear” that the species has this property, while the property especially (*maxime*) applies to the act.⁴¹ Thus, Auriol’s line of reasoning seems to be: since we *know* that the intellect has an act, and since the act is better at making the object present to the intellect than any intelligible species would be, a separate intelligible species is redundant, and Ockham’s razor dictates eliminating it. Auriol goes on to suggest that the agent intellect together with the phantasm are perfectly suited to moving the possible intellect to its act with no intelligible species involved, asking why the phantasm and agent intellect should be able to cause a species in the possible intellect, but not an intellectual act directly?⁴²

That is not entirely the end of the story, however. One of the reasons that Scotus had postulated the intelligible species was to account for dispositional knowledge: the intelligible species in the possible intellect was the intellectual memory awaiting actualization. Auriol brings this up: Isn’t *this* a reason to claim that we need intelligible species, that is, to reduce the intellect from

perfectum continet imperfectum in virtute; sed impossibile videtur quod duo accidentia, quorum unum continet aliud in virtute, sint distincte in eodem subiecto, sicut tepiditas et calor in summo; igitur species, quae est similitudo rei imperfecta et remissa, non poterit esse in eodem intellectu distincta ab intellectione, quae est in eodem perfecta et expressa similitudo eiusdem obiecti.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 47va; ed. 1605, pp. 127bF–128aB. All quotations from Auriol’s *II Sent.* are taken from the Florence manuscript with minor modifications clearly indicated; the early printed edition of 1605 is rife with errors, making the text nearly impossible to understand. I am preparing a working edition of the text for publication.

39. Auriol, *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: “species ponitur in intellectu ad repraesentandum obiectum et facere obiectum praesens intellectui, et ad exhibendum ipsum in esse praesentiali; sed hoc maxime competit intellectioni; igitur non videtur quod sit ponenda species alia ab intellectione.” Florence, BNC, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 47vb; ed. 1605, p. 128aE.

40. Auriol, *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: “ubi est eadem ratio, ibi est idem illud quod sequitur ex ratione illa; sed actus intelligendi habet quod exhibeat rem praesentem in prospectu mentis, quia est vera similitudo rei. Hoc autem convenit speciei, ipsa enim est rei similitudo, licet non ita clara. Igitur ipsa species vere exhibet rem praesentem, ac per consequens est vera rei intellectio.” Florence, BNC, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 47vb; ed. 1605, p. 128bD–E. Cp. also the beginning of the text in note 13 for the same claim about the function of mental likenesses.

41. See notes 39 and 40.

42. Auriol, *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: “Praeterea: non videtur ratio quare intellectus agens cum phantasmate non possit reducere intellectum possibilem ad actum respectu intellectionis, sicut respectu speciei quam ponis in intellectu; non videtur enim quod phantasma et intellectus agens simul habeant maiorem repugnantiam ad causalitatem intellectionis quam speciei. Et confirmo hoc per Aristotelem, III *De anima*, qui dicit quod sicut se habent sensibilia ad sensum, sic phantasmata ad intellectum; sed secundum eum ibidem actio sensibilis est passio ipsius, sonatio enim est auditio, coloratio est visio; quare in intellectu prima impressio formae a phantasmate in intellectu erit ipsa intellectio.” Florence, BNC, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 48ra; ed. 1605, p. 129aF–bA.

essential potency to a merely accidental potency (i.e., the readiness to issue into act that is associated with being able to remember as opposed to learning something for the first time)? Auriol's answer looks to be a firm *no*: with regard to simple intellection, that is, first-order knowledge of things and their natures, Auriol claims approvingly that "Aristotle doesn't think that the intellect is brought from essential potency to accidental potency with respect to the act that is simple intellection or consideration through anything inhering in the intellect"—Aristotle only thought that about complex acts of composing and dividing.⁴³

Now, as far as I can see, the most promising way of interpreting Auriol's claim that, with regard to simple acts of intellection, the intellect is not brought from essential to accidental potency through anything inhering in the intellect, that is, anything with its own subjective being, is that the intellect goes directly from essential potency—the bare intellectual capacity completely unactualized as a *tabula rasa*—to full actuality as soon as a representation with its own subjective being is in the intellect. At least two reasons can be given that appear to argue for this interpretation. First, it is well known that Auriol is committed to the fundamental activity of cognitive powers in general, and the intellect in particular;⁴⁴ this view of the intellect as fundamentally active would militate against having anything simply "lying around" in the intellect, and this is probably precisely how Auriol saw the type of accidental potency that some of Auriol's contemporaries thought species to be. So Auriol probably thought that holding species to be nonoccurrent knowledge, priming the intellect for actual knowledge, compromised the intellect's fundamental activity. And this leads us to a second reason to take this interpretation seriously: once Auriol had rejected species, he had also rejected the common way of explaining intellectual memory (i.e., dispositional or habitual knowledge), and so, in order to say how we can have memory of things we have thought in the past, he was pushed to say that all those thoughts remain in act. If past mental events are not dispositionally available for recall (as an intelligible species account of memory would have it), then they have to be *actually* available for recall—unless you are willing to

43. Auriol, *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: "Dices quod immo, ipse [scil., Aristoteles] enim dicit quod anima ante actum fit de potentia essentiali in potentia accidentali, hoc autem non est nisi per speciem. Dico quod Aristoteles non intelligit ibi quod intellectus fiat de potentiali essentiali in potentia accidentali respectu actus qui est simplex intellectio et consideratio per aliquid inhaerens intellectui, sed intelligit hoc respectu actus complexi, qui est considerare. Considerare enim proprie est unum cum alio per intellectum componere et dividere, et tunc ipse vult quod respectu talis actus complexi intellectus primo fiat de potentia essentiali in potentia accidentali per aliquid inhaerens intellectui. Illud autem est habitus scientiae secundum mentem suam." Florence, BNC, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 48ra; ed. 1605, p. 129bB–C. In discussion, Richard Cross pointed out that claiming that we have habitual knowledge of complexes but not of the components of complexes, seems at the very least ad hoc if not nonsensical. I do not know what Auriol has to say about this (if anything).

44. See, e.g., Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 90, 93.

deny the existence of intellectual memory (which Auriol is not). And this is what Auriol appears to be proposing.

As mentioned, however, what is entailed by this interpretation is that, for Auriol, for there to be a mental representation in the intellect just *is* for the intellect to be in act or have an act. To put it in another way, if there is a real likeness of a thing in the intellect, then it exists in the intellect as an intellectual act, and this is what Auriol called “the absolute of intellection.” As we have seen, Auriol rejects the distinction between essential and accidental potency in simple intellectual cognition, at least as it was normally understood in his day, and that means that the intellect is either bare (essential) potency or fully in act—there is no dispositional, accidental potency in between. But, as mentioned before, from Aristotle and on, the whole point of some type of essential/accidental potency distinction in cognition, was to explain the *fact* of dispositional knowledge, namely, that we can store away experiences and knowledge, recalling them later without having to acquire them from scratch. In short, not all of the knowledge in our possession is occurrent, and the device of accidental potency was an elegant way to explain how this could be the case. However, by doing away with the essential/accidental potency distinction in cognition, by making all of our simple intellectual knowledge actual, Auriol seems to be committed to the view that we think occurrently everything that we ever have thought, and that is manifestly false.

He has a way out, of course, and it works off of the intellect’s constant need in this life to work with the senses and especially the imagination.⁴⁵ Thus, Auriol tells us that something’s existing in *esse apparens*, and hence that thing’s appearing to us, depends on (1) that thing’s being in the intellect as the object of the intellectual act (i.e., the absolute of intellection), and (2) that thing’s being in the imagination as the phantasm, that is, the occurrent object of the imagination. This appeal to the phantasm is how Auriol answers precisely the charge that, on his view, according to which all simple knowledge is actual, we should right now know occurrently everything that we have ever known:

There is a doubt concerning whether a human being actually understands all the things of which she has a species. I say she doesn’t, because in order for a thing to be understood there is required, besides the reality of the intellection [i.e. the intellectual act], that the thing is put in judged and apparent being founded in that same thing’s phantasized cogitated being, and since many things at once cannot actually (*actu*) have that phantasized being, thus even though there are many intellections actually in the intellect, nevertheless there will not be many things understood through

45. Thus, here we could consider Auriol to be filling in gaps in Thomas Aquinas’s famous device of “turning to the phantasm.”

these intellections, but only the one that holds phantasized being in the phantasm.⁴⁶

Auriol claims that the reason that we do not know everything at once is because there is a logjam at the imagination, and the logjam arises because the imagination is an organic power, capable of sending on merely one phantasm at a time to the agent intellect.⁴⁷ On his theory, all of us have lots of acts of the intellect at once—everything that we have ever learned or experienced or known is actually in the intellect right now. Each one of those acts, moreover, is, as we saw, a “package deal” involving the production of the intentional object (*dictio*) and the reading of the same object (intentional *intellectio*). All of our simple intellectual knowledge is *actual* in this way. Nevertheless, it isn’t all *occurrent*, because in order for the object of intellectual cognition to appear to us, that is, in order for us to have conscious awareness of it and thereby intellectual cognition, there has to be a coincidence between the thing I am thinking in the intellect and the thing I am phantasizing (imagining) in the imagination. For us human beings in this life, only one thing can appear to us at once—that is, we can be conscious of only one thing at a time—and that is because of the necessity for our conjoined intellect to work with the imagination.⁴⁸

46. Auriol, *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: “Sic igitur ex his colligitur quod res secundum esse quod habet in prospectu mentis quod est esse intentionale et apparens dependet realiter a duobus, et ab illa intellectione reali, a qua habet quod sit esse distinctum de non-ente, et ab esse rei phantasiato, in quo habet necessario fundari in quantum suum esse est esse iudicatum. Deficiente igitur altero istorum, puta intellectione reali vel esse rei in phantasmate in actu, deficit necessario res habere esse obiectivum et praesentiale in intellectu; et ideo res ut sic non potest habere esse intellectivum quocumque illorum deficiente, propter colligantiam necessariam harum intentionum, scilicet intentionis intellectae et imaginatae. . . . Tunc ad propositum, cum dubiatur si actu homo intelligit omnia quorum habet species, dico quod non, quia ad hoc quod res intelligatur, requiritur ultra realitatem intellectionis quod res ponatur in esse iudicato et apparenti fundato in esse eiusdem rei phantasiato cogitato, et quia plures res simul non possunt habere esse actu phantasiatum, ideo licet actu sint plures intellectiones in intellectu, non tamen erunt plura intellecta per illas intellectiones, sed unum tantum quod capiet in phantasmate esse phantasiatum.” Florence, BNC, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 48va; ed. 1605, p. 130bB–E.

47. Auriol makes a very clear statement of this at *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 4, q. 3 (ed. 1605, p. 139bD), quoted and discussed briefly in Friedman, “On the Trail of a Philosophical Debate: Durandus of St. Pourçain vs. Thomas Wylton on Simultaneous Acts in the Intellect,” in *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, ed. S. Brown, T. Dewender, and T. Kobusch (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 442.

48. One wonders how Auriol will deal with the cases of disembodied souls or angels, neither of which have the organic power of the imagination, and hence would appear, on Auriol’s view, to have necessary occurrent conscious experience of all their past intellectual acts. An answer to that will require another venue, but perhaps he could use “attention” or the gaze of the mind to explain this, the will directs the gaze of the mind to focus on some of the intentional objects being produced by the many actual intellectual acts in the intellect. Thus, attention, just as much as the imagination, could be a device to explain why we have only a limited number of thoughts at once, and one that could be used also with separated souls.

Interestingly, Auriol does in fact give a way of positing a difference between the species in the intellect, on the one hand, and the intellectual act (*intellectio*), on the other; in addition, he claims that there is a way to talk about the intellect's being in first and second actuality with regard to its cognition. Both of these return us to the material we dealt with in the first part of this paper. Recall that for Auriol intellection—true understanding—is only said to occur when the object of understanding *appears* to the one who is said to understand. For Auriol, cognition is based upon consciousness, and in order to be said to understand *x*, you have to be conscious of *x* because *x* appears to you. With that in mind, Auriol's suggestion is that we can use the term "species" to denote all of those intellectual acts of which we are in possession, but of which we have no awareness because the object of those acts are not *appearing* to us: this is the intellect in first act (not, however, in accidental potentiality, since the intellect is fully actualized, just not accessible to conscious experience). On the other hand, we can call "intellection" that one intellectual act at a time whose object does appear to us, and this is the intellect in second act.⁴⁹ When we go from the intellect in first act to the intellect in second act, we possess the same reality—the same absolute of intellection is inhering in the intellect—there is a merely "intentional" difference, inasmuch as the object of intellection now appears to the conscious cognizer. This fits well with the claims of Auriol that we saw earlier: that species and *intellectio* are really (*realiter*) the same as the intellectual act. So, Auriol can save in his cognitive theory the use of the term "species," and the distinction between first and second act, through a type of semantic distinction. But that should not obscure the fact that he has rejected the intelligible species on any normal understanding of it, claiming that in the intellect we have only intellectual acts, and that these intellectual acts are all in full act—we have no dispositional or habitual knowledge as such, what we have is actual knowledge that is non-occurrent on account of the fact that we can entertain in the imagination only one image at a time, and in order to be con-

49. Auriol, *II Sent.*, d. 11, pars 3, q. 1: "*Ex hoc patet quomodo in intellectu distinguitur actus primus, qui est species, ab actu secundo, quae est intellectio. Non enim sunt duae realitates in intellectu, sed eadem realitas dicitur species quoad realitatem praecisam et absolutum intellectionis, et ex hoc habet praecise quod sit actus primus. Eadem autem realitas ut connotat rem secundum esse obiectivum apparens, dicitur intellectio. Et quia potest realitas illa esse in intellectu absque hoc quod res per illam capiat esse obiectivum et praesens, puta si phantasia non sit in actu circa rem illam, hinc est quod species potest esse in intellectu absque intellectione. . . . Ideo facta intellectione rosae in intellectu, quae idem est quod species eius, et facta phantasia in actu respectu eiusdem, statim sequitur per modum sequelae necessariae esse intellectivum et obiectivum ipsius rosae in intellectu. Sic ergo mutatio non est ad esse intentionale in intellectu per se; sed sequitur ad ipsam intellectionem et actum phantasiae simul vel ad alterum si alterum praefuit.*" Florence, BNC, conv. soppr. A.3.120, f. 48va; ed. 1605, pp. 130bF–131aC. See also *ibid.*, p. 131bB–D.

scious of something there has to be a coincidence between the object of the intellect and the object of the imagination.⁵⁰

Summing up: For Peter Auriol, concept formation comes about in the following way: a true mental representation, a likeness of the thing, informs the intellectual power, and the intellect so informed simply is in act. The intellectual act issues into a metaphorical production of the thing understood in intentional being, the thing itself in another mode of existence, *esse apparens*; the same intellectual act also “reads” the intentional object that it produces and contains. The intellectual act is inseparable from both of these respects towards the intentional object; it cannot even be thought to exist without them. When the object considered in the imagination coincides with the object of one of these acts of the intellect, then the intellect and the person understanding truly cognize that object, because the intentional object—the object of cognition in apparent being—appears to the conceiver. At that point we are having conscious experience, precisely because we are being appeared to. This is the hallmark of the cognitive for Auriol. According to him, all the other mental representations might as well be shone to a wall or a floor; only when a thing *appears* to a cognitive power is there cognition. In this way one can say that consciousness, or the ability to be appeared to, is the most primitive category in Auriol’s theory of cognition, that which is explanatorily basic.

There are a great number of problems or at least puzzles about Auriol’s view: It is very “spooky” in its use of intentional being, and Auriol owes us an explanation for how a real intramental representation can help us put the extramental object itself into a different type of being. And to return to the caveats with which I began this chapter, I think neither that Auriol has a compelling theory of consciousness nor that he would have been alone among medievals in thinking the appearance of the thing to be an important part of cognition. But for him the fact that something appears to a cognizer, the fact that the cognizer is

50. In his *Quodl.*, q. 8, a. 3, Auriol claims (ed. 1605, p. 85bC) that “licet species et actus cognitivus idem sint secundum suum absolutum, tamen differunt ratione in hoc quod ubicumque in potentia non-apprehensiva, aut vitali dispositione existente in qua non est apprehensiva, similitudo illa ponatur, habet rationem tantummodo speciei et non actus, et ideo species in memoria sensitiva aut in medio non est comprehensio; in potentia vero cognitiva est comprehensio, non additur autem, dum est comprehensio, nisi sola praesentialitas et apparentia obiect[iv]i, quod est purum ens rationis,” and he appeals (ed. 1605, p. 86aE–F) to the coincidence of the object of the imagination and intellect as the reason that there can be “species” (which seem also here to be intellectual acts we are not currently conscious of) in the possible intellect. All of this is based on what we can call “Auriol’s cognitive rule” (ed. 1605, p. 84aA): “omnis similitudo existens in potentia cognitiva ultimate disposita est actus cognitivus.” Thus, in his magisterial *Quodlibet*, Auriol has nuanced his view: a species and an act differ only rationally; when a species is in a fully (*ultimate*) disposed apprehensive power, then it is a cognitive act; otherwise it is merely a species; a part of the intellect’s being fully disposed is the coincidence of the object of imagination and intellect.

aware or conscious, is the all-important point in his cognitive theory; it is what cognition is all about. This overwhelming emphasis on cognition as the thing's appearing does seem to be something significant and interesting about Peter Auriol, especially inasmuch as it is an emphasis that will only gain in importance as we enter the modern world.